

II

Planning, Programming, and Design

CALIFORNIA TRIAL COURT FACILITIES STANDARDS

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STANDARD

1. Standing Committees on Facilities

Each court in the state should have a standing committee(s) on facilities charged with assessing long-term needs of the court, consulting on design and construction, and monitoring maintenance of court facilities.

The committee should work with the presiding judge and court executive officer in developing the program for the facility. The program, along with the architect's schematic drawings, plans, and specifications, should be submitted to the entire bench for approval.

STANDARD

2. Needs Assessment/Program Analysis

An orderly process should be undertaken to prepare a program for the facility. The program should be presented to and approved by the court, which has statutory authority to approve the plans.

Comprehensive needs assessment and program analysis should include:

- clear definition of goals, including future needs assessment;
- compilation of data related to persons involved in the judicial system, their activities, and their space needs;
- establishment of functional and spatial relationships between persons, departments, and work;

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- **assessment of existing staffing requirements and projection of needs over the life span of a building;**
- **development of space use plans for each court and department;**
- **examination of future trends in the law, trends in court administration and public service, court security, and projected custodial needs;**
- **development of alternative schemes and assessment of their functional, environmental, and economic feasibility; and**
- **recommendations for phasing in of implementation to keep costs and disruption of work at minimum levels.**

Comment

Each court in the state should plan effectively for future facility needs. Because court facilities are complex structures affecting many governmental agencies and citizens, the best planning procedures should be utilized to project needs and develop building programs to meet those needs.

3. Renovate or Build New

STANDARD

The decision whether to build a new facility or renovate an existing one requires consideration of:

- **historical or architectural values to be preserved;**
- **use of facility by other agencies;**
- **adherence to local building codes;**
- **life cycle costs;**
- **functionality;**
- **future expansion;**
- **ability to comply with these standards;**
- **security and custodial requirements;**
- **operational efficiency;**
- **accessibility; and**
- **impact on other departments/functions housed in the facility.**

Comment

The decision to build a new facility or renovate an existing one should be part of a comprehensive plan for replacement and growth, taking into consideration

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all relevant factors. Piecemeal decisions can be costly in the long run, and unilateral, one-agency considerations can be shortsighted and ineffective.

4. Expansion Capabilities

STANDARD

Expansion capabilities for at least the next 20 years should be considered in the architectural plans and construction. For example:

- In a new court, either vertical or horizontal expansion should be included in the architectural plans to meet the needs for future expansion for 10 years beyond the scheduled occupancy date.
- Foundations and mechanical and structural elements should be able to support additional courtrooms.
- Site planning should include an analysis of whether a second building (a phase II) could be located on the site within a reasonable period of time.
- Areas planned for office use should be designed to allow for conversion to court space—including, for example, column-free spaces with appropriate floor-to-ceiling heights, conduit runs, and other considerations.

Comment

Large building sites for courthouses are limited in California, and the judiciary is experiencing a period of growth. Every new courthouse should be capable of cost-effective expansion.

5. Energy and Water Conservation, Life Cycle Costs, and Material Finishes

STANDARD

Operating system design and material selection should take into account the need to conserve energy and the latest technologies for doing so. Particular consideration should be given to durability of materials, water and energy conservation, and life cycle costs.

Comment

In order to ensure that a minimum amount of all forms of energy will be consumed, careful analysis should be applied to building orientation and configuration, exterior wall and roof systems, glazing and sun control systems, weatherproofing, and other passive conservation practices; in addition, planning should include the means to minimize both internally and externally generated energy demand loads in concert with a life cycle cost analysis. Design should make maximum use of energy saving and water conservation features. This includes proper placement on the site, careful selection of building materials, appropriate sizes and types of windows and doors, use of solar devices, appropriate water conservation features, and internal zoning of heating and air conditioning. Local courts should pursue funding sources and advice from state and federal energy resources and conservation agencies.

6. Employee Health and Safety

STANDARD

In the design and construction of the courthouse, care should be taken in the architecture as well as the selection of architectural appurtenances so as to minimize risks to the safety, health, and comfort of the courthouse worker.

Lighting fixtures, colors, floor and wall materials, and spatial relationships of workers to equipment should be designed and selected so as to reduce, to the extent possible, the risk of eye strain or other health risks associated with the use of video display terminals.

Ventilation should be adequate, especially in areas housing photocopying and other equipment that may emit odors or potentially toxic substances.

Smoking is prohibited in all court facilities pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 989.5 [see Appendix A, page 87].

The location of, spatial relationships of, and materials used in clerical, administrative, and judicial offices should be designed so as to reduce the noise level to a minimum.

Comment

No court can function without clerical and administrative support. Modern technological equipment such as video display terminals and other tools are of great benefit; however, care must be taken that any possibility of harm

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associated with their use is reduced to a minimum. While existing studies are not conclusive, certain design, lighting, and spatial factors that enhance worker safety have been identified.

While not within the ambit of this committee's mandate, it is useful to note that additional protective factors consist of personnel practices that provide, for example, adequate rest periods away from the terminal. Also, some video display terminal manufacturers have installed shields designed to reduce emissions from the terminal.

7. Room Ratios

STANDARD

In planning the courthouse spaces, consideration should be given to providing other than a one-to-one ratio for:

- **authorized judicial officers to courtrooms and chambers;**
- **jury courtrooms to jury deliberation rooms; and**
- **chambers to courtrooms.**

Planning should also include establishing an appropriate ratio of hearing rooms to courtrooms.

Comment

Economies of construction and flexibility of use can dictate deviation from the traditional pattern of providing one chambers for each courtroom, one jury deliberation room for each courtroom, etc. Judicial absences for vacations and illnesses mean that there can be fewer courtrooms than authorized judicial officers without inhibiting trials. On the other hand, providing more chambers than judicial officers can accommodate visiting, retired, and other temporary judges without disturbing the chambers of any regularly assigned judicial officer.

In courthouses with more than five courtrooms, the juries will seldom be deliberating all at the same time, so fewer jury deliberation rooms than courtrooms are needed. An approximate ratio of 75 per cent of jury deliberation rooms to courtrooms would be appropriate. Because the bulk of the caseload is disposed of prior to trial, providing hearing and conference rooms can decrease the number of full-sized standard courtrooms while still giving each judicial officer a place to hold court or hearings.

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The clustered chambers concept recommended by these standards (see Section V.1., Judge's Chambers) furthers flexibility in the use of judicial officers in the court or hearing room most appropriate to the calendar.

8. Recycling

STANDARD

Any new construction should provide for recycling by allowing storage space for recyclable materials and collection areas for such materials within the courthouse.